

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1. (Canceled)

2. (Currently amended) A method of assembling steering columns, comprising the steps of:

forming a cylindrical column jacket;

forming a pair of flat surfaces back to back on an outer surface of said cylindrical column jacket so that the pair of flat surfaces of said column jacket extend parallel to an axis thereof;

forming a pair of joint projections comprising a pair of flat inner surfaces conforming to the pair of flat surfaces of said column jacket on a bracket adapted to be coupled along the axis of said column jacket so that the pair of flat inner surfaces of said joint projections are parallel to each other;

temporarily fitting said projections of said bracket along the flat surfaces of said column jacket; and

crimping said projections into the flat surfaces of said column jacket, wherein a punch is applied with an inner surface of said column jacket being supported by a die so that the pair of joint projections are crimped individually with the punch pressed toward a center of said column jacket at two spots on each side along the axis of said column jacket.

3. (Previously presented) A method of assembling steering columns according to claim 2, wherein in forming said a pair of joint projections, said projections are symmetrically formed with respect to the center of said bracket.

4. (Canceled)

5. (Previously presented) A method of assembling steering columns according to claim 2, wherein in forming said column jacket, a cylindrical column jacket is formed from a mild steel tube.

6. (Previously presented) A method of assembling steering columns according to claim 2, wherein in forming said column jacket, a cylindrical column jacket is formed from an Al-Mn alloy tube.